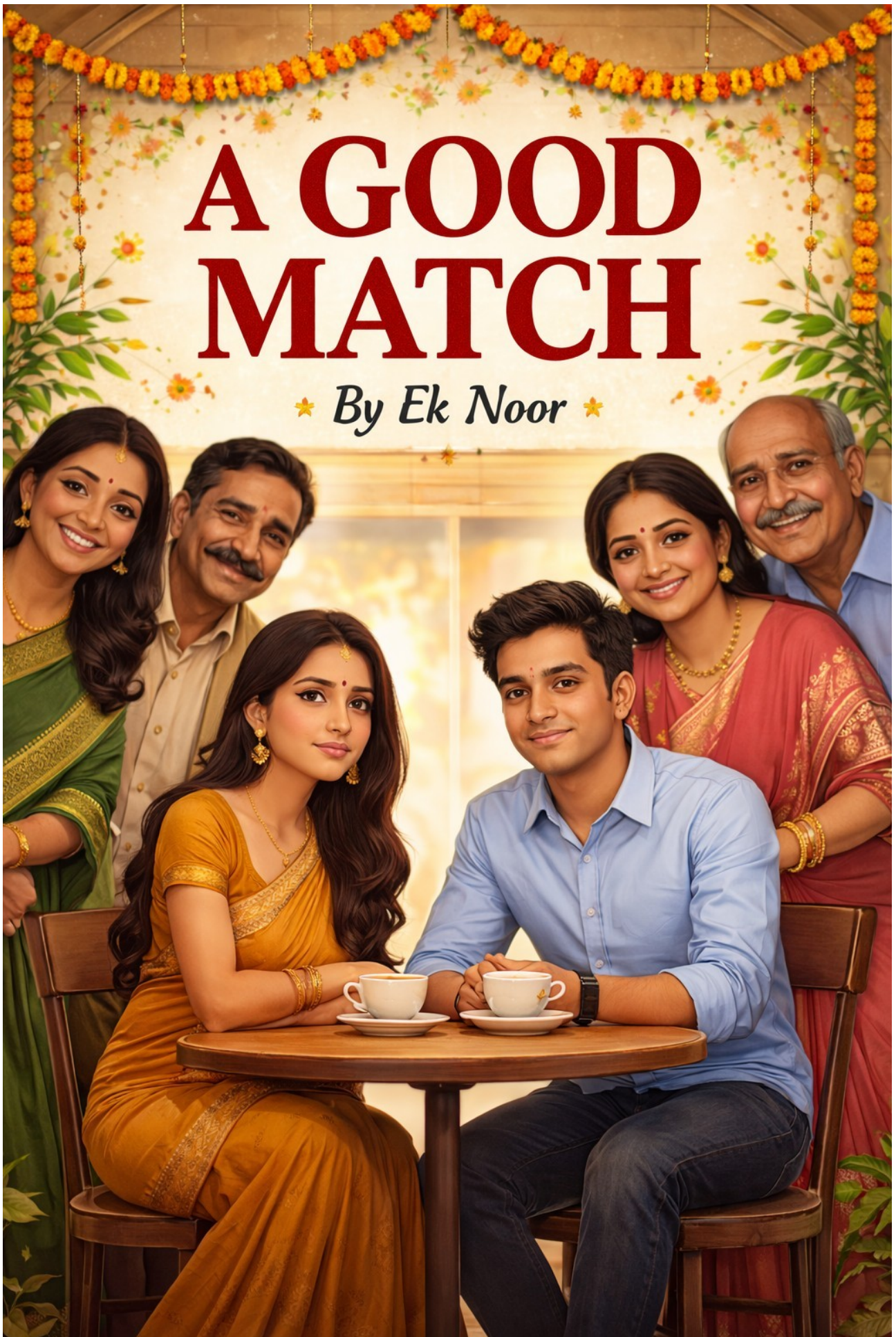


A GOOD MATCH

★ *By Ek Noor* ★



Title: A GOOD MATCH

By Ek Noor

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Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real people, families, or places is purely coincidental.

CHARACTER LIST:

SONIA GUPTA – Mid 20s, daughter of Mr and Mrs Gupta

MR GUPTA – Late 50s, Sonia's father

MRS GUPTA – Mid 50s, mother of Sonia

RAJ KAPOOR – Late 20s, son of Mr and Mrs Kapoor

MR KAPOOR – Late 50s, father of Raj

MRS KAPOOR – Mid 50s, mother of Raj

MR VERMA – Mid 60s. Both families mutual friend (Uncle)

WAITER - A young man

ACT I – A Good Match

Setting: A cafe, used throughout the play. Table and some chairs

(MR KAPOOR and MRS KAPOOR are seated. MR VERMA joins them. RAJ arrives last.)

MRS KAPOOR: You're late.

RAJ: Traffic.

MR KAPOOR: Sit.

(RAJ sits. WAITER appears.)

WAITER: What would you like?

MRS KAPOOR: Water.

MR KAPOOR: Water.

MR VERMA: Tea.

RAJ: Coffee.

(Everyone looks at him.)

RAJ: I'll pay.

(WAITER exits.)

MR KAPOOR: So...

MRS KAPOOR: We saw the girl.

RAJ: Yes.

MR VERMA: Decent family.

MRS KAPOOR: Very decent.

MR KAPOOR: Educated.

MRS KAPOOR: Working.

RAJ: She likes her work.

MR VERMA: That's fine.

(Beat.)

MR KAPOOR: Before marriage.

(Small, knowing laugh.)

MRS KAPOOR: Good height.

MR VERMA: Nice complexion.

MRS KAPOOR: Teeth are a bit...*(searches for word)*...big.

(Beat.)

RAJ: That's just her face.

MR KAPOOR: Nobody is saying anything.

MRS KAPOOR: We are just observing.

MR VERMA: Otherwise very nice.

RAJ: She's confident.

MRS KAPOOR: Confidence is good.

MR KAPOOR: Within limits.

(Beat.)

MR VERMA: Girl should adjust.

RAJ: Adjust to what?

MRS KAPOOR: Marriage.

(Simple. Final.)

MR KAPOOR: Her mother was very eager.

RAJ: She was nervous.

MRS KAPOOR: That's normal. They are getting a settled boy.

MR VERMA: Good job.

RAJ: You know what I do?

MR KAPOOR: IT.

RAJ: What kind?

MR KAPOOR: Good kind.

(Beat. RAJ raises his hands and gives up.)

MRS KAPOOR: They will pay for the wedding.

MR VERMA: Yes, of course.

MR KAPOOR: We are asking for a simple wedding.

MRS KAPOOR: We can manage.

(WAITER returns with drinks.)

WAITER: Here you go.

MRS KAPOOR: Thank you.

(WAITER leaves.)

MR VERMA: So what do you think?

RAJ: I like SONIA.

(Small pause. This is acknowledged, not prioritised.)

MRS KAPOOR: It's important she fits in.

MR KAPOOR: But liking is not enough.

MR VERMA: Compatibility matters.

MRS KAPOOR: Adjustment matters.

MR KAPOOR: Status matters.

(Beat.)

RAJ: She wants to keep working.

MRS KAPOOR: Of course.

MR KAPOOR: Until children.

MR VERMA: Everything changes after marriage.

MRS KAPOOR: We think this is a good match.

MR KAPOOR: Very good.

MR VERMA: We can overlook small things.

(They all nod.)

RAJ: Overlook. Like what?

(They don't hear him.)

MRS KAPOOR: *(Gestures to Mr Verma)* From our side the answer is yes.

MR KAPOOR: Fix the date soon.

MR VERMA: Before problems start.

(They stand.)

WAITER: The bill?

RAJ: I said I'd pay.

(He pays with his smart phone.)

MR KAPOOR: Good boy.

(They exit, satisfied. RAJ lingers a moment, then follows.)

BLACKOUT.

ACT II – A Very Good Match

Setting: Same Cafe, same table, as in ACT I.

(MR GUPTA and MRS GUPTA are already seated. Bags on chairs. MR VERMA joins them. SONIA arrives last.)

MRS GUPTA: Sit properly.

SONIA: I am sitting.

MR GUPTA: Don't argue in public.

(SONIA adjusts herself.)

WAITER: What would you like?

MRS GUPTA: Tea.

MR GUPTA: Tea.

MR VERMA: Tea.

SONIA: Coffee.

(Everyone looks at her.)

SONIA: I'll pay.

(WAITER exits.)

MRS GUPTA: So...

MR GUPTA: We spoke to them.

MRS GUPTA: Very nice people.

MR VERMA: Good status.

SONIA: Status of what?

MR GUPTA: Everything.

(Beat.)

MRS GUPTA: Boy is working.

SONIA: In what?

MR GUPTA: IT.

SONIA: What kind?

MR VERMA: Good kind.

(SONIA smiles. It doesn't help.)

MRS GUPTA: He is little chubby.

SONIA: You noticed that first?

MR GUPTA: Health is not bad.

MR VERMA: After marriage men improve.

(Beat.)

MRS GUPTA: He is quiet.

SONIA: He barely spoke.

MR GUPTA: That's good.

MRS GUPTA: Less arguments.

MR VERMA: Peaceful house.

(They nod, satisfied.)

SONIA: Did you ask him anything?

MRS GUPTA: What is there to ask?

SONIA: About work. Expectations. Living...

MR GUPTA: These things come later.

SONIA: Later when?

(Beat.)

MRS GUPTA: After marriage.

MR VERMA: Good boy. Good family.

SONIA: Do they know I want to keep working?

MRS GUPTA: Of course.

MR GUPTA: They said no problem.

SONIA: They said that?

MR VERMA: Everyone says that.

(Beat.)

MRS GUPTA: You should not complicate things.

SONIA: I'm not complicating. I'm asking.

MR GUPTA: Asking too much is also complicating.

(Silence.)

MRS GUPTA: We think this is a good match.

MR GUPTA: Very good.

MR VERMA: You are lucky.

(SONIA absorbs that word.)

SONIA: Do I have a choice?

(Pause.)

MRS GUPTA: Of course.

(Beat.)

MR GUPTA: But think carefully.

MR VERMA: Such boys don't come again.

MRS GUPTA: Age is also there.

SONIA: Whose age?

(No answer.)

WAITER: Here you go.

(Places drinks.)

WAITER: Anything else?

MRS GUPTA: No no. Enough.

(WAITER leaves.)

SONIA: I want to meet him again.

(Pause. This feels unnecessary.)

MR GUPTA: Why?

SONIA: To talk.

MRS GUPTA: Talk about what?

SONIA: Life.

(Beat.)

MR VERMA: Life happens after marriage.

(They all nod.)

MRS GUPTA: We will say yes.

MR GUPTA: Fix the date.

MR VERMA: Before minds change.

(They stand.)

SONIA: *(Quietly)* Whose mind?

(No one hears.)

WAITER: The bill?

SONIA: I said I'd pay.

(She pays with her smart phone.)

MRS GUPTA: *(smiling)* Good girl.

(They exit. SONIA remains seated for a moment, then follows.)

BLACKOUT.

ACT III – Everything Is Fixed

Setting: Same Cafe, same table and many more chairs.

(The table is crowded. Chairs overlap. Someone is half-standing. Everyone smiles too much.)

MRS KAPOOR: Such a nice place.

MRS GUPTA: Yes, but small.

MR KAPOOR: So. All fixed.

MR GUPTA: The hall is booked.

MR VERMA: Very efficient.

RAJ: We thought...

MRS KAPOOR: *(interrupting)* First, good news.

MRS GUPTA: Yes, good news.

(They lean forward.)

MRS KAPOOR: We've invited some extra people.

MR GUPTA: How many?

MRS KAPOOR: About a hundred.

(Beat.)

MR KAPOOR: Close relatives.

MR GUPTA: Our hall won't fit.

MRS KAPOOR: Then change the hall.

MRS GUPTA: Deposit is paid.

MR KAPOOR: Then adjust numbers.

MR GUPTA: We already adjusted.

MR VERMA: Let's stay calm.

(Everyone nods. No one is calm.)

SONIA: The hall fits exactly...

MRS GUPTA: *(quickly)* Beta, let elders talk.

(SONIA leans back.)

RAJ: We could reduce...

MRS KAPOOR: *(interrupting)* You cannot uninvite people.

MR KAPOOR: What will they say?

MR GUPTA: What will...it cost?

(Polite silence.)

MRS KAPOOR: Money should not matter.

MRS GUPTA: It matters to us.

MR VERMA: Marriage needs adjustment.

(They all nod. This is the solution.)

SONIA: Who is adjusting?

(Silence.)

MR KAPOOR: The girl's side of course...

MRS KAPOOR: ...adjusts.

(They smile.)

RAJ: Actually...

MRS GUPTA: *(interrupting)* Everything is already fixed.

MR KAPOOR: People are invited.

MR VERMA: Deposits are paid.

MRS KAPOOR: Let's not spoil things now.

(SONIA and RAJ exchange a look.)

(SONIA and RAJ stand. Chairs scrape.)

RAJ: We have been dating behind your backs. We've decided something.

SONIA: We're getting married.

(Relief.)

MRS KAPOOR: Where?

SONIA: At the registry office.

(Shock.)

MR GUPTA: What?

MRS GUPTA: Without wedding?

RAJ: Tomorrow.

MR GUPTA: What about the hall?

SONIA: Cancel it.

MRS KAPOOR: The cards?

RAJ: Recycle them.

MR VERMA: People will talk.

SONIA: They already are.

(Beat.)

MRS KAPOOR: This is not how things are done.

MRS GUPTA: You'll regret this.

SONIA: Maybe.

(RAJ and SONIA step away from the table.)

WAITER: Sorry. The bill?

(Everyone freezes.)

SONIA: Separate bills.

(SONIA smiles. RAJ smiles. They hold hands and exit.)

(The parents remain, stunned.)

MR VERMA: This generation.

MRS KAPOOR: No adjustment.

MR GUPTA: Too much freedom.

(They sit in silence.)

WAITER: *(shy)* Card or cash?

(Lights dim.)

BLACKOUT.